

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-45. (cancelled).

46. (currently amended): A method comprising:

providing a telephone apparatus coupled to at least a first telecommunications line and a second telecommunications line, the telephone apparatus having a handset, a handset-receiving portion and a hands-free audio interface;

while the handset is received by the handset-receiving portion, communicating a first audio input and a first audio output of a first telephone call on the first telecommunications line via the hands-free audio interface;

in response to the handset being removed from the handset-receiving portion during the first telephone call, muting the first audio input and maintaining to communicate the first audio output of the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface and communicating a second audio input and a second audio output for a second telephone call on the second telephone line via the handset.

47. (currently amended): The method of claim 46 further comprising:

in response to the handset being replaced to the handset-receiving portion during the first telephone call, unmuting the first audio input to the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface.

48. (currently amended): A telephone apparatus coupled to at least a first telecommunications line and a second telecommunications line, comprising:

a handset;

a handset-receiving portion;

a sensor to sense if the handset is removed from the handset-receiving portion;

a hands-free audio interface; and

a telephone circuit responsive to the sensor to communicate a first audio input and a first audio output to a first the telephone call on the first telecommunications line via the hands-free audio interface while the handset is received by the handset-

receiving portion, and to mute the first audio input and maintain communicating the first audio output of the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface and communicate a second audio input and a second audio output to a second telephone call on the second telecommunications line via the handset in response to the handset being removed from the handset-receiving portion during the first telephone call.

49. (currently amended): The telephone apparatus of claim 48 wherein the telephone circuit is to unmute the first audio input to the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface in response to the handset being replaced to the handset-receiving portion during the first telephone call.

50. (currently amended): An article of manufacture comprising:
a computer-readable storage medium; and
computer-readable data stored by the computer-readable storage medium, the computer-readable data to direct a telephone apparatus coupled with at least a first telecommunications line and a second telecommunications line, having a handset, a handset-receiving portion and a hands-free audio interface, to communicate a first audio input and a first audio output of a first telephone call on the first telecommunications line via the hands-free audio interface while the handset is received by the handset-receiving portion, and in response to the handset being removed from the handset-receiving portion during the first telephone call, to mute the first audio input and to maintain communicating the first audio output of the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface and to communicate a second audio input and a second audio output to a second telephone call on the second telecommunications line via the handset.

51. (currently amended): The article of manufacture of claim 50 wherein the computer-readable data is further to direct the telephone apparatus to unmute the first audio input to the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface in response to the handset being replaced to the handset-receiving portion during the first telephone call.

52. (currently amended): A a method comprising:

providing a telephone apparatus coupled with at least a first telecommunications line and a second telecommunications line, the telephone apparatus having a handset, a handset-receiving portion and a hands-free audio interface;

while the handset is removed from the handset-receiving portion, muting a first audio input and communicating a first audio output of a first telephone call on the first telecommunications line via the hands-free audio interface and communicating a second audio input and a second audio output to a second telephone call on the second telecommunications line via the handset; and

in response to the handset being replaced to the handset-receiving portion during the first telephone call, unmuting the first audio input and maintaining to communicate the first audio output of the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface.

53. (currently amended): A telephone apparatus coupled with at least a first telecommunications line and a second telecommunications line, comprising:

a handset;

a handset-receiving portion;

a sensor to sense if the handset is received by the handset-receiving portion;

a hands-free audio interface; and

a telephone circuit responsive to the sensor to mute a first audio input and communicate a first audio output of a first telephone call on the first telecommunications line via the hands-free audio interface and communicate a second audio input and a second audio output of a second telephone call on the second telecommunications line via the handset while the handset is removed from the handset-receiving portion, and to unmute the first audio input and maintain communicating the first audio output of the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface in response to the handset being replaced to the handset-receiving portion during the first telephone call.

54. (currently amended): An article of manufacturing comprising:
a computer-readable storage medium; and
computer-readable data stored by the computer-readable storage medium, the computer-readable data to direct a telephone apparatus coupled with at least a first telecommunications line and a second telecommunications line, having a handset, a handset-receiving portion and a hands-free audio interface, to mute a first audio input and communicate a first audio output of a first telephone call on the first telecommunications line via the hands-free audio interface and communicate a second audio input and a second audio output of a second telephone call on the second telecommunications line via the handset while the handset is removed from the handset-receiving portion, and to unmute the first audio input and to maintain communicating the first audio output of the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface in response to the handset being replaced to the handset-receiving portion during the first telephone call.

55. (currently amended): A method comprising:
providing a telephone apparatus coupled with a first telecommunications line and a second telecommunications line, the telephone apparatus having a hook switch and a hands-free audio interface;

while the hook-switch is depressed, communicating a first audio input and a first audio output of a first telephone call on the first telecommunications line via the hands-free audio interface; and

in response to the hook switch being released, muting the first audio input and maintaining to communicate the first audio output of the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface and communicating a second audio input and a second audio output for a second telephone call on the second telecommunications line via a the handset.

56. (currently presented): The method of claims 55 further comprising:
subsequent to the hook switch being released, unmuting the first audio input to the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface in response to the hook switch being depressed.

57. (currently amended): A telephone apparatus coupled with at least a first telecommunications line and a second telecommunications line, comprising;
a hook switch;
a hands-free audio interface; and
a telephone circuit responsive to the hook switch to communicate a first audio input and a first audio output of a first telephone call on the first telecommunications line via the hands-free audio interface while the hook switch is depressed, and to mute the first audio input and maintain communicating the first audio output of the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface and communicate a second audio input and a second audio output of a second telephone call on the second telecommunications line via a the handset in response to the hook switch being released.

58. (currently presented): The telephone apparatus of claim 57 wherein, subsequent to the hook switch being released, the telephone circuit is to unmute the first audio input to the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface in response to the hook switch being depressed.

59. (currently amended): An article of manufacture comprising:
a computer-readable storage medium; and
computer-readable data stored by the computer-readable storage medium, the computer-readable data to direct a telephone apparatus coupled with at least a first telecommunications line and a second telecommunication line, having a hook switch and a hands-free audio interface, to communicate a first audio input and a first audio output of a first telephone call on the first telecommunications line via the hands-free audio interface while the hook switch is depressed, and in response to the hook switch being released, to mute the first audio input and to maintain communicating the first audio output of the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface and to

communicate a second audio input and a second audio output to a second telephone call on the second telecommunications line via a the handset.

60. (currently presented): The article of manufacture of claim 59 wherein the computer-readable data is further to direct the telephone apparatus to unmute the first audio input to the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface in response to the hook switch being depressed subsequent to the hook switch being released.

61. (currently amended): A method comprising:

providing a telephone apparatus coupled with at least a first telecommunications line and a second telecommunications line, the telephone apparatus having a hook switch and a hands-free audio interface;

while the hook switch is released, muting a first audio input and communicating a first audio output of a first telephone call on the first telecommunications line via the hands-free audio interface and communicating a second audio input and a second audio output to a second telephone call on the second telecommunications line via a the handset; and

in response to the hook switch being depressed during the first telephone call, unmuting the first audio input and maintaining to communicate the first audio output of the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface.

62. (currently amended): A telephone apparatus coupled with at least a first telecommunications line and a second telecommunications line, comprising:

a hook switch;

a hands-free audio interface; and

a telephone circuit responsive to the hook switch to mute a first audio input and communicate a first audio output of a first telephone call on the first telecommunications line via the hands-free audio interface and communicate a second audio input and a second audio output of a second telephone call on the second telecommunications line via a the handset while the hook switch is released, and to unmute the first audio input and maintain communicating the first audio output of the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface in response to the hook switch being depressed.

63. (currently amended): An article of manufacture comprising:
a computer-readable storage medium; and
computer-readable data stored by the computer-readable storage medium, the computer-readable data to direct a telephone apparatus coupled to at least a first telecommunications line and a second telecommunications line, having a hook switch and a hands-free audio interface, to mute a first audio input and communicate a first audio output of a first telephone call on the first telecommunications line via the hands-free audio interface and communicate a second audio input of a second telephone call on the second telecommunications line via a the handset while the hook switch is released, and to unmute the first audio input and to maintain communicating the first audio output of the first telephone call via the hands-free audio interface in response to the hook switch being depressed.
64. (cancelled).
65. (previously amended): The method of claim 46, further comprising the step of communicating a second audio output via the handset.

I. Introduction

Claims 46-63 and 65 are pending in the application. In the Office Action dated April 13, 2004, the Examiner objected to Claim 52 due to an informality. Further, Claims 46-63 and 65 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,069,943 ("David") in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,588,041 ("Meyer"). In this Amendment, Claims 46-63 and 65 have been amended. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to Claim 52 and the rejection of Claims 46-63 and 65 in light of the amendment to the claims and the following remarks.

II. Claim 52

Independent Claim 52 was objected to due to an informality. Claim 52 has been amended to remove the informality. Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the objection to Claim 52.

III. Claims 46-63 and 65

Claims 46-63 and 65 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over David in view of Meyer. Claims 46-63 and 65 have been amended to be directed towards a telephone apparatus coupled at least to a first and second telecommunications line. Accordingly, these rejections are moot in view of the claim amendments. Additionally, applicants respectfully submit that these claims are patentable over David even when modified by conventional speakerphone technology.

Taking amended Independent Claim 46 as an example, Claim 46 recites a telephone apparatus having a handset, a handset-receiving portion and a hands-free audio interface ***that is coupled to at least a first and second telecommunications line***. While the handset is received by the handset-receiving portion, a first audio input and a first audio output of a first telephone call on the first telecommunications line is communicated through the hands-free audio interface. ***In response to the handset being removed from the handset-receiving portion of the telephone apparatus***, the first audio input of the first telephone call is muted while the first audio output continues to communicate the first telephone call through the hands-free audio interface. Additionally, ***in response to the handset being removed from the handset-receiving***

portion, a second audio input and a second audio output to a second telephone call is initiated on the second telecommunications line and communicated through the handset. Like Independent Claim 46, Independent Claims 48, 50, 52-55, 57, 59, and 61-63 recite elements related to initiating a second audio input and a second audio output to a second telephone call on a second telephone line in response to a handset being removed from a handset-receiving portion (Claims 46, 48, 50, and 52-54) or in response to a hook switch being released (Claims 55, 57, 59, and 61-63).

As admitted by the Examiner, David does not transition between telecommunications modes in response to removing a handset from a handset-receiving portion. In contrast, David teaches transitioning between telecommunications modes by ***pressing a collaborative call key on the teleconferencing telephone set***. Because David does not transition between telecommunications modes in response to removing a handset from a handset-receiving portion, David does not communicate a second audio input and a second audio output for a second telephone call on a second telecommunications line via the handset in response to removing the handset from the handset-receiving portion.

When combined with conventional speakerphone technology, David still does not yield Claim 46. Conventional speakerphone telephones often comprise a handset, a handset-receiving portion, and a hands-free audio interface. Typically, during a telephone call being communicated through the hands-free audio interface, when the handset is removed from the handset-receiving portion, the same telephone call that was communicated through the hands-free audio interface is transferred to the handset. In other words, removing the handset does not communicate a second audio input and a second audio output for a second telephone call on a second telecommunications line via the handset in response to removing the handset from the handset-receiving portion.

Therefore, David, alone or as modified with conventional speakerphone technology, does not teach during a first telephone call, initiating a second telephone call on a different telecommunications line ***in response to removing a handset from a handset-receiving portion of a telephone apparatus***. All of the other independent claims have been amended to include the limitation of initiating a second telephone call on a second telecommunications line in response to removing a handset from a